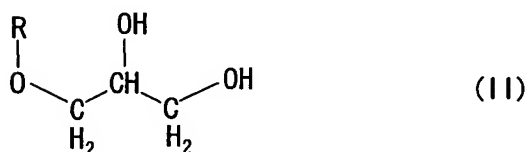
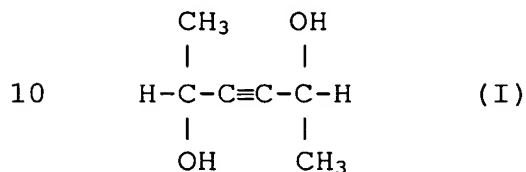
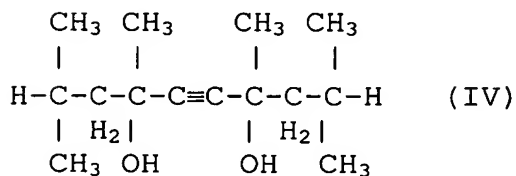
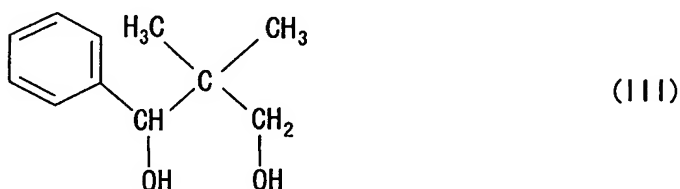


CLAIMS

1. An external skin treatment composition comprising, based upon total weight of the composition, 0.001% by mass or more of a diol compound having the formula (I), (II), (III) or (IV) or the derivative thereof and a balance of a carrier:



wherein R indicates a benzyl group or phenyl group.



2. An external skin treatment composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diol compound is 3-hexine-2,5-diol having the formula (I).

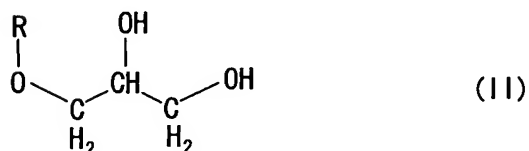
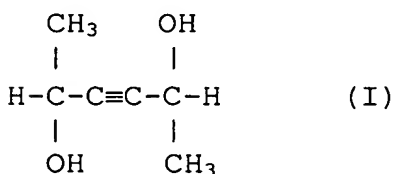
3. An external skin treatment composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diol derivative is a glycerin derivative having the formula (II).

4. An external skin treatment composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diol compound is 2,2-dimethyl-1-phenyl-1,3-propanediol having the formula (III).

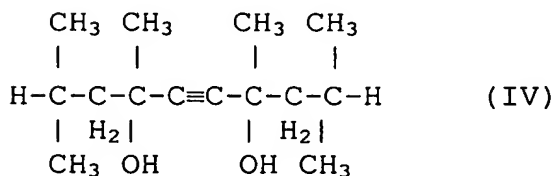
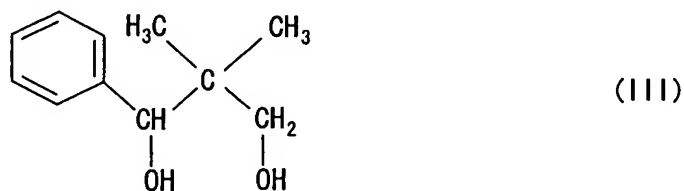
5. An external skin preparation composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diol compound is 2,4,7,9-tetramethyl-5-decine-4,7-diol having the formula (IV).

6. An external skin preparation composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the content of the diol compound or its derivatives is 0.001 to 10% by mass, based upon the total weight of the composition.

7. An antimicrobial agent comprising a diol compound having the formula (I), (II), (III) or (IV) or the derivative thereof.



wherein R indicates a benzyl group or a phenyl group.



8. An antimicrobial agent as claimed in claim 7, wherein the diol compound is 3-hexine-2,5-diol having the formula (I).

5 9. An antimicrobial agent as claimed in claim 7, wherein the diol derivative is a glycerin derivative having the formula (II).

10 10. An antimicrobial agent as claimed in claim 7, wherein the diol compound is 2,2-dimethyl-1-phenyl-1,3-propanediol having the formula (III).

11. An antimicrobial agent as claimed in claim 7, wherein the diol compound is 2,4,7,9-tetramethyl-5-decine-4,7-diol having the formula (IV).